

August 9, 2007

From: Joe Plankis, Town Council, Economic Development

To: Town Council members, APC members, Department Heads

Subject: Keys to Economic Development

As the representative from the Town of Westfield to the Hamilton County Alliance (HCA), I attend the monthly Executive Committee meetings of that organization. As most of you know, the HCA is the main conduit for leads for firms seeking sites for plant, office, or headquarters locations. I have attached two documents with this memo, which I received at today's meeting. They indicate the important issues that we must address in order to be competitive with other communities, whether they are local, in state, or out-of-state communities. I felt it was important enough, that I needed to share that information with all of you.

One document is the PowerPoint presentation from a Duke Energy sponsored conference that was held last Friday for LEDO's or Local Economic Development Organizations such as the Hamilton County Alliance (HCA). One of the panel members was Katie Culp, who I have worked with recently when she represented a local firm regarding tax abatement. Katie's full time job for Colliers Turley Tucker, a commercial real estate brokerage firm, is to help their clients negotiate incentives from communities and the state. What I am describing is truly the way economic development is being handled today.

There are several key points in that presentation that everyone should understand.

- 1) Timeliness of responses for information. Failure to respond by the deadline to a broker or the Indy Partnership (through Jeff Burt) is used as a filtering tool for communities to make the so-called short list for continued consideration. If you are late, you are no longer going to be considered. Many times when I receive an inquiry from Jeff, I may have less than 48 hours to respond with all of the information that was requested. If you or someone in your department is asked for information, which may be maps, data of some sort, or other types of information, you will be given a deadline which will allow me to then consolidate the information for a timely return to Jeff. Your support in this effort has been wonderful and we have not missed any deadlines up to this point and that effort is appreciated. My goal is to build up databases and files of certain types of information in order that Sevelta, who is my administrative assistant and splits her time between Parks and Economic Development, or I can access that information in a timely manner. Much of the information is "boilerplate" info that we should always have readily available for inquiries so we do not have to ask staff more than once for that information. Other information may be project specific.
- 2) We must have "pad ready" or so-called "shovel ready sites" so that a company can go to the community development department and obtain a building permit and get started with a project. That is the concept with the Noblesville Corporate Park. We must have a "Corporate Park" ordinance in place as soon as possible. That is only one of the many steps necessary to be competitive. I will be working with the APC, Town Council and staff to make that happen. Every day that goes by, we are just that much further behind the curve.
- 3) We must make our best offer with incentives up front. If our offer is inferior, we are off the list for consideration. There is no time in today's environment to make a "low-ball"

offer and hope they come back to negotiate. Firms are no longer doing that. We are now structuring our offers accordingly.

- 4) The basic key word for everyone to understand is SPEED. Speed means time and money to a developer or a firm looking for a site. Anyone that comes in contact with or participates in the economic development process must understand that the one most important aspect for being successful in the very competitive game of economic development is speed. That means we all have to think out of the box and find ways to shorten any part of the process that makes us non-competitive.

The second piece of information I am providing is a PowerPoint discussion of “Defining Quality of Life”. Most of the items discussed are those that we have heard before: good schools, low crime rates, affordable housing, etc. One item you will hear about in the future, especially with the technology changes in manufacturing, is the level of education of the workforce. The ability to have easy access to continuing education, whether technical or college level programs, will be ever more important. You will hear more about this item in coming months.

Each of you that are receiving a copy of these documents has, and will continue to have, an impact on economic development, either through your actions or through the actions of your co-workers. What I truly believe will give Westfield the advantage over the long-term, is the dedication and efforts I have seen from many of the employees of the town up to this point. Thank you for all your efforts.

We will be asking even more in the future, but there is no doubt in my mind that it can be achieved with everyone’s help, open mindedness and co-operation.

After you have had an opportunity to review the attached information, do not hesitate to contact me with any questions at my cell number, 625-4387, or by email, [plankis\\_westfieldeconomicdev@gotown.net](mailto:plankis_westfieldeconomicdev@gotown.net) .

# Duke Energy LEDO Conference

- Entrepreneurship
  - Growing support of entrepreneurship as an ED strategy
  - Indiana is putting more resources in tech-related entrepreneurship
  - Focus on growth-oriented companies rather than lifestyle businesses

# Duke LEDO Conference cont.

- Site Selection Panel
  - Tim Monger
  - Katie Culp
  - Jay Walters
  - Linda Williamson
- Biggest change in site selection
  - Speed (using failure to meet RFI deadline as a filtering tool (shortlisting))

# Duke LEDO Conference cont.

- Pad ready sites needed (because of pace of projects)
- Shortlisting is occurring after initial submittal
- Communities must increasingly put best offer up front. Companies less inclined to enter into lengthy incentive negotiations.
- Early best-offer is being used by some communities and states to make sure they get into shortlisting round and put competing locations in a catch up position.

# Defining Quality of Life



HCA Executive Committee

August 9, 2007

# QoL Perspective

---

## ❑ Outside looking in

- Pre-conceived notion of a location
- Impact of emotions on decisions
- Can bias a location

## ❑ Inside looking out

- See the newcomer picture
- Understand the market from the inside
- Beyond cultural and artistic issues

# What really matters?

---

- Executive site selection focus.
- QoL needs to focus on issues of concern to rank and file employees, not just executives.
- Corporate decision goal is to help the average employee achieve a middle class lifestyle.



# QoL Elements

---

- ☐ Access to good public schools – Expansion Management rankings
- ☐ Ability to find affordable housing – percent of homeownership at right price point
- ☐ Safe and secure neighborhoods – crime index
- ☐ Education Attainment – as found in the labor pool from which employees are drawn from.

## QoL Elements cont.

---

- Standard of Living – measures where an individual's income will go the farthest and still meet test for crime and education.
- Ease of commuting – commute times and ability to readily access lifestyle amenities.
- Continuing Education – Easy access to educational opportunities as a vehicle to worker upward mobility.

## QoL cont.

---

- Commercial Air Access – Is becoming a hard screen in site location process with more flights and carriers a preference.
- Labor Market – Desirable selectivity of workers at competitive cost.

## Site Selection Process Outcome

---

- Which location among competing markets helps control costs, offers best opportunity for corporate success and presents better access to middle-class lifestyle.